
TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE....

A Column on Consumer Issues

by Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem's
Consumer Protection and Antitrust Division

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411 Cellular Phone Directories

There are currently several e-mail rumors or hoaxes being circulated that are causing quite a stir. The rumors state that cell phone numbers will soon be published in a directory, just like the telephone directories, and that "to be assured that your cell phone number is not published in the book, you should sign up your cell phone number on the 'Do Not Call' registry."

Fact or Fiction A directory of cell phone numbers will soon be published.

FACT

Fact or Fiction You must register your cell phone with the national "Do Not Call" directory before January 1, 2005, to prevent your number from being provided to telemarketers.

FICTION

It is true that some of the major wireless phone providers intend to compile a directory of cell phone numbers as early as Spring 2005. However, the numbers will be made available only if the customers "opt in" and agree to have their number listed. Customers must specifically request to be added to the directory. The numbers of customers who do nothing will not be included in the directory, those who choose to be listed can have their numbers removed from the directory if they change their minds, and there is no charge for requesting to be included or choosing not to be included.

The numbers will be accessible only by those who call information (411). The providers have indicated that the numbers will never be available to telemarketers, only to operator service centers performing the 411 directory assistance service. The numbers will not be published in a printed directory or on the Internet. The cost to call 411 and ask for a cell phone number would range from 50 cents to \$1.25, the same fee charged to request a number for a landline phone. In accordance with state and federal law, you can register your cellular phone on the "Do Not Call" list. This can be done by calling 1-888-382-1222 or by going online at www.ag.state.nd.us. Click on the "Do Not Call" icon to register. To register online, you must have a valid e-mail address so that a confirmation e-mail can be sent to you once registration is complete.

The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division investigates allegations of fraud in the marketplace. Investigators also mediate individual complaints against businesses. If you have a consumer problem or question, call the Consumer Protection Division at 328-3404, toll-free at 1-800-472-2600, or 1-800-366-6888 (w/TTY). This article and other consumer information is located on our website at www.ag.state.nd.us.

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